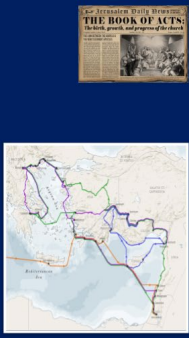


Acts 097  
Refuting Anti-Semitism  
Acts 16:19-31  
March 11, 2026  
Dr. Andy Woods

Here we are in the Book of Acts. There are three major sections to the Book of Acts. This comes from Acts 1:8: the church's witness in Jerusalem (Acts 1-7); Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-12); then Jesus said, "You will be My witnesses to the remote parts of the earth" (Acts 13-28). We see that with Paul's first missionary journey all the way to Rome. That is where the Book of Acts ends, in Acts 28.

**Structure (Acts 1:8)**

- Jerusalem (Acts 1–7)
- Judea and Samaria (Acts 8–12)
- **Remotest part of the earth (Acts 13–28)**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey (Acts 13–14)
  - Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1-35)
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey (Acts 15:36 –18:22)**
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:17)
  - Trip to Rome (Acts 21:18–28:31)



We are in that third larger section, not the first missionary journey, not the Jerusalem council, but the second missionary journey. That is a section in Acts 15:36-18:22. This is when Paul went on missionary journey two. That is what we are studying currently.

The second missionary journey began with a good old-fashioned church fight. I am glad that never happens in modern-day Christianity. (I am being a little facetious, of course.) There was a split between Paul and Barnabas related to whether they were going to take John Mark on missionary journey two. Paul said no; Barnabas said yes. They got into an intense conflict.

The Book of Acts does not tell us who was right or who was wrong. It just says that they disagreed over this. The two parties split. It was not the worst thing in the world. Sometimes God can use conflicts and splits to further His purposes, because now we have not one missionary team, but two.

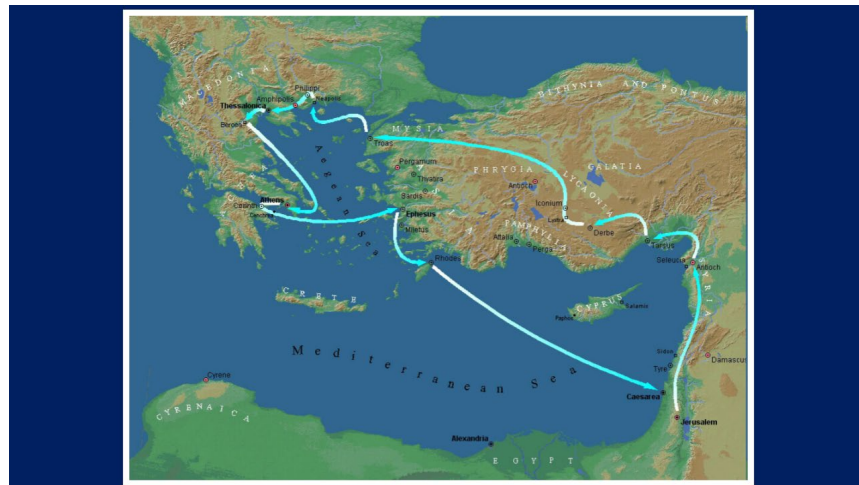
Barnabas and Mark go to the island of Cyprus, and Luke stops tracking them because Luke is all about tracking Paul to Rome. They fall off the radar screen. It is not that they

are not active in ministry, but that they are not a focus of Luke in his book, the Book of Acts.

Then we have Paul and Silas, who replaces Barnabas, and a little bit later Timothy joins the group (Timothy probably replaced Mark). They travel through Syria and Cilicia. As they are making that journey, that is where Timothy joins the missionary team and is circumcised. We talked about that.

Then you go down to Acts 16:6-10, and that is where Paul has the vision of the Macedonian man. He had that vision in Troas. The Spirit says, "Do not go down here. Do not go up there. This is off limits." Why? Because the Holy Spirit knew that the gospel had already gotten either into those areas or would get into those areas, so just keep moving.

He comes to Troas. That is where he gets the vision of the Macedonian man at night, where this man says, "Come over and help us." The missionary team at that point penetrates Europe for the first time. If you ever wondered how you can go to Europe today and see so much Christian architecture and you wonder how Christianity got into Europe, the Book of Acts tells you how it happened. It was with this vision of this Macedonian man.



They travel and they come to Philippi. That is the whole subject matter of Acts 16, the Philippian ministry, which is in Acts 16:11-40. This is where Luke is. He no longer says, "They did this," or "They did that." All of a sudden, he says, "We did this," and "We did that," meaning that Luke joined the group in certain parts of the Book of Acts.

That is what we call a "we" section. It begins midway through Acts 16 and goes all the way through the end of the chapter. Then after Acts 16, Luke says "they" again. Apparently Luke stayed behind in Philippi. He will not say "we" again until around Acts 20:5. Now we have four missionaries: Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke. We know Luke is there because he says "we."

They hit Philippi and that starts the Philippian ministry. Paul wins his first convert to the Lord, a woman named Lydia. She gets saved Verses 11 through 15 through the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:11-15). I call this the "Empire Strikes Back," because whenever the church makes progress, Satan throws up hindrances.

A demonized slave girl starts following Paul around and yelling things out that happen to be true: "These men are servants of the Most High God, and they come to teach the way of salvation" (Acts 16:17). She did it in a way that was a disturbance. It was a demon inside of this slave girl that was causing her to say these things.

Paul put up with it for a while. Then he finally had enough. Under his apostolic power and authority (the signs of an apostle), he cast the demon out of the slave girl. This did not make the owners happy, because the demon inside the slave girl gave her the ability to predict the future.

The owners of this demonized slave girl had a whole profitable business set up like palm readers and psychic hotlines and astrological charts and things like that today where, if you can convince people that you can predict their future, they will pay you a lot of money for the service. That power was taken away from her the moment the demon left her, so the owners grabbed Paul and Silas.

- IV. Philippian Ministry (Acts 16:11-40)
  - A. Lydia's conversion (11-15)
  - B. Demonized slave girl (16-18)
  - C. Paul and Silas' imprisonment (19-34)
    - 1. Imprisonment (19-24)
      - a) Motive (19)
      - b) Accusation (20-21)
      - c) Mob beating (22)
      - d) Imprisonment (23-24)
    - 2. Jailer's conversion (25-34)
      - a) Timing (25)
      - b) Earthquake (26)
      - c) Jailer's response (27)
      - d) Paul's response (28)
      - e) Jailer's reaction (29-30)
      - f) Gospel message (31)
      - g) Household evangelism (32)
      - h) Results of salvation (33-34)
  - D. Departure from Philippi (35-40)

As we are going to see here, they stir up trouble and get Paul and Silas thrown into a Philippian jail, which was the plan of God, because it is going to lead to the second major conversion here in Philippi—the Philippian jailer is going to get saved, just as

Lydia got saved earlier in the chapter. That is the section we are in: Paul and Silas' imprisonment (Acts 16:19-34).

We can divide this into two parts: first is the imprisonment (Acts 16:19-24); and then after that the jailer's conversion (Acts 16:25-34). Notice first of all, the imprisonment, where we pick it up with the motive of the imprisonment:

*"But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities" (Acts 16:19).*

Why did they have Paul and Silas thrown in jail? Because their profit motive had been taken away. If you go back to the end of Acts 16:16, it talks about this demonized slave girl: "[she] was bringing her masters much profit by fortune telling." She was bringing in the gravy train for her master, and no more demon inside of her meant no more ability to predict the future—the revenue stopped. The owners are so upset about Paul—because he cast the demon out of this girl—that they try to get him thrown into jail.

This is a way that Luke brings up the guilt of first-century Israel. First-century Israel is not portrayed well in the Book of Acts. They are the ones that are stirring up trouble against the Apostles in the church. They are the ones that are persecuting the church everywhere they go. No matter where Paul goes, he gets persecuted by unbelieving Israel. The Gentiles, however, never get mad at Paul, until he interferes with their money. Once he interferes with their money, then they get mad at him.

Luke is showing that the Jews are mad at Paul all of the time, no matter what he does and where he goes. The Gentiles are a little bit better, but we should not put decreased sainthood on them because the moment Paul does anything that interferes with somebody's pocketbook, the Gentiles get mad.

This is another way Luke is showing the guilt of first-century Israel. It is not that Jews do not get saved in this book. They do. It is not that Jews do not get saved today. They do. It is not that God does not have a future plan for the nation of Israel. He does. But, other than those things, first-century Israel, for the most part, was a Christ-hating, Christ-rejecting nation.

Talk about a miscarriage of justice. They broke every rule in the book to get Jesus declared guilty as fast as they could so they could get Him over to Rome as fast as they could to get Him executed since Rome had taken away from the Jews the power of capital punishment.

If you study the trials of Jesus it is a joke, all the rules that they broke. You are not supposed to put someone to death except on the testimony of two to three witnesses. They did not have their two to three witnesses. The trial was not supposed to take place at night, the various trials of Christ—but some of them did take place at night. They

broke every rule they could in the Torah, in Hebrew, Bible, in Mishnah and Talmud, to get Jesus liquidated as fast as they could.

Now that Jesus is dead—He did not die, of course, He rose from the grave, and He is now at the right hand of the Father working through the church—first-century Israel is doing the exact same thing to the church, persecuting them constantly. The Gentiles leave Paul alone unless it is a case like this, where somebody's pocketbook is interfered with. Then the Gentiles get mad. It is a literary device, thematically, that Luke is using, to show the guilt of first-century Israel.

Then you go down to Acts 16:20-21 and you see the accusation that this owner raised against Paul:

*"And when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, 'These men are throwing our city into confusion,' being Jews, and our proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans" (Acts 16:20-21).*

The way it worked in Rome is that Israel, the Jewish people, enjoyed freedom of religion; they could do what they wanted. The one thing they could not do, according to Roman law, was to try to evangelize or proselytize. Once they tried to evangelize or proselytize anybody, they were in trouble with Roman law.

This becomes the basis for the false accusation brought by the owners against Paul: "These guys are Jews. They are here proselytizing. They are functioning against the non-proselytizing laws of Rome, therefore, they are guilty. Therefore, let us throw them in jail." That is how they cloaked their true motive. They cloaked it under all of that stuff, but the real motive was, "Our ability to make money from this slave girl has been taken away."

There was anti-Semitism in this time period. Anti-Semitism is the irrational hatred of the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You can see anti-Semitism here where these Gentile slave owners are saying, "These guys are Jews and they are causing us trouble." If you want more evidence of anti-Semitism in this time period, you could jot down Acts 18:2, which is coming later in our study of the Book of Acts.

*"Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome" (Acts 18:2).*

First-century Israel is not portrayed well here in the Book of Acts. Anti-Semitism, the irrational hatred of the Jewish people, was alive and well. That is the basis of this false charge against Paul and his missionary team here. When you see that anti-Semitism was alive and well even back then you can understand what Paul is doing in Romans 9-11, which he will be writing later on.

Most preachers, when they preach through the Book of Romans, they skip right over Romans 9-11. They do not know what to do with it. They look at it as a digression or an afterthought, but it is critical to Paul's argument. Earlier in the book Paul is talking about the promises of God, particularly in Romans 8—nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:35-39), and those kinds of promises.

I am thinking that some guy in the back of the room, when Paul was teaching, raised his hand and said, "Paul, if God is going to keep His promises to us, how can we trust Him if He broke His word to Israel?" That becomes the explanation as to why Romans 9, 10 & 11 is in the Book of Romans. It is a vindication of God's character as a covenant-keeping, promise-keeping God.

His theme here is: How can God be trusted to be faithful to us if He has been unfaithful to Israel? Answer: Romans 9, 10 & 11. God has not been unfaithful to Israel. God has a whole plan and program in mind in which He is going to fulfill every single promise He has ever made to the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Paul lays this out in three chapters: Romans 9—Israel in the past, elected; Romans 10—Israel in the present, rejected because they have rejected their King; Romans 11—Israel in the future, accepted. By the time you finish Romans 11, you say, "Wow, God is a real promise keeper. Therefore, the promises He has made to me as a Gentile (Romans 8) can be taken right to the bank."

He is not going to break His word to the Jew. If He is not going to break His word to the Jew, He is not going to break His word to you.

In the interim, before God fulfills His promises in and through Israel, Paul describes them in Romans 11 as natural branches broken off from their tree. In their place for a season, He has brought in these wild branches that really do not belong, like an orange branch in an olive tree, for example. Who would that group be? That is us Gentiles.

In the process of describing this, he tells the unnatural branches (us Gentiles) not to be arrogant towards the natural branches that have been broken off in unbelief. He says to us:

*"Do not be arrogant towards the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you" (Romans 11:18).*

He explains here that God is capable of taking the natural branches and putting them back into their tree. That is a very simple thing for God to do. He has already done the greater agricultural miracle, has He not? He has taken unnatural branches and inserted them into a tree where they do not belong. How hard is it for God to reach out His hand and stick the branches that are supposed to be there in the first place? That is the

purpose of the seven-year Tribulation period and all of those other things: to bring Israel to faith so they can be reinserted back into their own tree.

You get all of this teaching here on Israel. At some point you have to ask and wonder: Why does Paul go into all of this? He goes into it to vindicate God's character, but he also goes into it to put a lid on, to put a restraint on the anti-Semitism of the time. Claudius had kicked all the Jews out of Rome (Acts 18:2). The whole reason that Paul and Silas were thrown in prison is because they had circulated false rumors about Paul and Silas related to their Judaism.

Even in this time period, the world was turning against Israel. It is very easy for that mentality to come into the church. We are fighting that right now, to be honest with you. We have all of these podcasters and people in the MAGA movement who are trashing the Jewish people all of the time: Candace Owens, Tucker Carlson, Stew Peters, Matt Gaetz; and Megan Kelly. Am I leaving anybody out?

If you listen to these people, Israel is the problem with everything in the world. If you are around the conservative movement enough and you start hearing this stuff, the church itself can start to develop anti-Jewish sentiments. That was what was happening here in Acts 18 and Acts 16. There was this anti-Semitism that was alive and well, and Paul did not want it to seep into the church. That becomes another reason why, in a short period of time later, he will unfold God's future for Israel in Romans 9-11.

It was an anti-Semitic kind of charge: "These guys are violating Roman law, they are proselytizing. They are not supposed to do that as Jews." This is what got them thrown into prison. The real motive was that the owners were upset that their pocketbook was interfered with, because this little girl that did not have a demon inside of her anymore could not predict the future.

The crowd rises and gives Paul and Silas a beating:

*"The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off of them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods" (Acts 16:22).*

Paul and his letters that he will write later often refer to the fact that he was beaten with rods. Over in 1 Thessalonians 2:2, Paul will write (and this letter will also be written later on this missionary journey):

*"But after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi" (1 Thessalonians 2:2).*

When Paul talks about being mistreated in Philippi, he is referring to this event.

Later on, during missionary journey three he is going to pen 2 Corinthians 11:25, and he is going to say this: *"Three times I was beaten with rods"* (2 Corinthians 11:25). Clearly, one of those times had to have been what he experienced here. They literally took their clothes and their robes and ripped them right off of them. If you get hit with a rod, your clothes, I guess, can be like insulation. They did not want that and they wanted the pain to be inflicted.

These were the circumstances of the Apostle Paul. They are good things to think about when, in America, we think we are having a rough day. I am not downplaying anybody's suffering, but the truth of the matter is that we have it so easy in this country, and I thank God that we do. I do not know if I would want to live anywhere else, to be honest with you. But my problems have a tendency to be pretty light, compared to what these guys went through here.

This mob beating takes place and leads to an incarceration (Acts 16:23-24):

*"When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks" (Acts 16:23-24).*

I have actually had a chance to go to Philippi, and it is an area that is under great excavation. Here is a picture of what many believe was a Philippian jail:



Whether this was the exact jail that Paul and Silas were thrown into, we do not know—there is nothing inside there that says, "Paul and Silas were here"—but it shows you that when you study biblical archeology, it always corroborates what the text says. They were thrown in jail in Philippi. There have been different excavations of things that could have been that or a similar Philippian jail.

You notice the charge that was given to the guard: "*commanding the jailer to guard them securely*" (Acts 16:23). That is how it worked in Greco-Roman times. You were in charge of those prisoners, and if they got out on your watch, then your life was on the line. More on that in just a second. This jailer, when a miracle occurred and these guys could get free and did not, before he realized that they were still there, he was going to kill himself. That is why. Because of this very strong charge you were given, your life was on the line if these guys got free.

You will notice that it talks about an inner prison here:

*"And he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison" (Acts 16:24).*

Arnold Fruchtenbaum describes the inner prison this way:

"After having received such a charge (v. 24) and because his life depended on it, the jailer threw Paul and Silas into the inner prison. The Roman public prison had a vestibule, followed by the outer prison. Then came the inner prison, which was a dungeon with no light or air except what came through when the door was opened. The confinement in the inner chamber would make escape virtually impossible."<sup>1</sup>

I am going to add a little phrase here: absent a miracle. The only way these guys were getting out was if the hand of God moved.

Maybe you are in a prison of some kind. Have you ever been in a prison? Maybe not a physical prison, but a relational prison? An emotional prison? Or a spiritual prison? Maybe there is something in your life that you cannot shake loose from? We have a tendency in those circumstances to despair.

I have been in a prison before. Not literally, but something I went through in my late 20s that I could not get out of. I was in that prison—I will have to tell you about it sometime—for about a period of three years.

God moved His hand and got me out. Had I not been in that prison, I would have never seen the hand of God. It gives you a different perspective on struggles. If you are in some ditch you cannot get out of, and the only person you can depend upon is God—God is really good at putting you in circumstances where there is no way out other than Him. He is an expert at that.

I hate it when I have to go through it, but at the same time, it is a neat thing because you just say to yourself, "Lord, you are going to have to do something, and I cannot wait

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 351-52.

to see what you are going to do." I noticed that God does not always do the same thing every single time to get us out. He is really creative.

That is the circumstances that these guys were in. Then they are fastened in the stocks:

*"and fastened their feet in the stocks" (Acts 16:24).*

Arnold Fruchtenbaum says:

"But to make even more sure that Paul and Silas could not flee, the jailer made their feet fast in the stocks. This treatment was both unnecessary and cruel. The stocks were made from a piece of wood, such as a cross or a log or a large piece of timber, some of which had five holes: two for the wrists, two for the ankles, and one for the neck. Some had only two holes for the feet, which appears to be the case here. Paul's and Silas' feet were shackled after being stretched wide apart. All this shows that they underwent a very painful enclosure in the stocks and spent a very uncomfortable night, while their backs were still sore from being beaten with rods."<sup>2</sup>

What would you do in those circumstances? I know what I would do. I would be having the biggest pity party that you could have. I would be feeling so sorry for myself. Poor me, poor me. But look at these guys. It is unbelievable. We move into the conversion of the jailer. The jailer is converted because he sees something abnormal in these guys, he sees something that human beings cannot do in their natural self.

We have the timing of this conversion:

*"But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying—" (Acts 16:25).*

I can understand that part. "Lord, get me out of here." But this other part I do not understand because I do not have any ability to conjure this up in my natural self:

*"But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God" (Acts 16:25).*

Your average Christian today might go to church and complain about the music. Here, these guys are having a whole painful night. I do not care what style the music is, they are just singing praises to the Lord. "What hymn was it? Was it a hymn out of our hymnal?" I do not think it really mattered. They were praising the Lord.

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 352.

That is what the Holy Spirit can do inside a vessel that is yielded to Him. No self-help class or motivational class can take you to this level. This is supernatural stuff here.

*"But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them" (Acts 16:25).*

They were locked tight in this jail, but through the walls everybody could hear these guys praising the Lord. When you understand this, you understand why Paul, ten years later from Rome to Philippi (which is the area that we are studying) would write a book, one of his prison letters, called the Book of Philippians. In it he would say things like this:

*"Finally, brethren, rejoice in the Lord" (Philippians 3:1).*

*"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).*

The thing I love about Paul is that he never told people to do what he did not go through himself; he role-modeled, when he was with them on the second missionary journey ten years earlier, how to rejoice in all circumstances. When he writes to them from Rome ten years later and says, "Rejoice in all things," it is almost like he is saying to them, "Remember what God did through me in your midst about a decade ago."

Why were they singing songs? Because if you are controlled by the Holy Spirit, He will make you a worshiper.

*"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).*

When people are inebriated, they do stuff that is not normal: they drive too fast, and they talk too loudly. Just as being under the control of a foreign substance caused you to do things you would not normally do, in the same way, being under the control of the Holy Spirit causes you to do things you would not normally do. Like what? Like singing praises to the Lord in the midst of adversity. Weird stuff like that—stuff that we would never do on our own.

Paul says in Ephesians 5:18-19:

*"Do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit. Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:18-19).*

That is what the Spirit-filled life allows you to do. It allows you to sing to the Lord and praise to the Lord when you really do not feel like doing it because your circumstances are so bad. That is abnormal. You start living like that and people start to recognize

there is something very strange about you. They say, "I could never do that if I were in your shoes."

That is what is happening with these prisoners, listening to these guys sing and praise the Lord in the midst of adversity. This leads to a miracle. These guys need a miracle. It is interesting that if you are going to prepare your life for a miracle, one way to do that is to start praising the Lord before the miracle hits. That is what these guys are doing here.

Here comes the miracle. It is an earthquake:

*"And suddenly there came a great ["mega" μέγας] earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened" (Acts 16:26).*

That is quite a miracle. We have three things happening with this earthquake. Number one: the foundations of the prison are shaken.

By the way, Paul would write to the Thessalonians about a false letter that they would get telling them that they were in the Tribulation period. When they got that letter, they went into a theological earthquake because it is the same word "earthquake" [*saleuo*, σαλεύω] used there that is used here.

"That you not be quickly shaken ["earthquake", σαλεύω] from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come" (2 Thessalonians 2:2).

When they got this false letter saying that they were in the Tribulation period, even though he had told them they would not go through the Tribulation period, they were shaken like an earthquake.

Here that same word is used for a literal earthquake in Philippi. The foundations were shaken, and the doors were opened. Do you ever need a door in your life to be opened up? Sometimes you want to do something so badly—maybe it is a ministry opportunity, maybe it is a job—and every time you try, it is like you are hitting your head against a wall. Then you start to say, "Am I in the right place?" Maybe you are in the right place, you just need the door opened and only Jesus can open the door.

That is what He said to the church at Philadelphia, that little tiny, struggling church:

*"I have put before you an open door which no man can shut" (Revelation 3:8).*

*"Who opens and no man will shut, and who shuts and no man opens" (Revelation 3:7).*

Rather than kicking against the door constantly, ask the Lord, "If this is of You, I need You to open the door." He will open it if it is His will in His timing. That is the hard part. You have to wait on His timing. I want everything to happen pronto. My prayer request is, "Lord, give me patience and give it to me right now." But God does not work according to my timetable.

So the doors are open; the hands, which were obviously in a lot of pain, were loosed; and these guys are no longer chained to the wall.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum says:

"They were not necessarily loosened from the prisoners' hands, but the inmates were no longer chained to the wall. They were free to flee, yet they did not do so, thanks to the influence of Paul and Silas."<sup>3</sup>

Could you imagine a bunch of prisoners in this circumstance? Suddenly they are free. How fast would they leave town and get out of Dodge? These guys do not. Why didn't they run? Why didn't they flee, since that is the natural thing to do? They were filled with the Spirit. When you walk in the Spirit, the Spirit causes you to do unnatural things.

The jailer is not a happy camper when he discovers the doors are open. You see his response in Acts 16:27:

*"When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped" (Acts 16:27).*

He was given an order going back to Acts 16:23-24: "Throw these guys in jail. If they get out of jail, it is your life on the line."

You might remember the same thing happened in Acts 12:19 related to Peter's miraculous escape from jail:

*"When Herod had searched for him and had not found him, he examined the guards and ordered that they be led away to execution" (Acts 12:19).*

This was the penalty in Greco-Roman times of prisoners escaping on your watch.

In Acts 27:42, which we have not gotten to yet, it says this, dealing with a shipwreck:

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<sup>3</sup> Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 352.

*"The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none of them would swim away and escape" (Acts 27:42).*

Why did the soldiers want to do that? Because if these guys get away, then it is their lives that are on the line.

Resurrection Sunday is coming up. The empty tomb is an objective fact of history. It would have been really easy for the Romans or the Jews to go into the tomb, and to cart Christ throughout the city streets of Jerusalem to debunk the Christians, the early church members, who were saying, "He is risen." They could have easily put an end to that by just wheeling out the corpse, but they never did that. Why didn't they? Because the tomb was empty.

There have been developed, over the course of time, all of these naturalistic explanations as to why the tomb was empty. One is called the swoon theory, that He never really died, which is crazy because the Roman soldier made sure He was dead by jamming the spear into His side (John 19:34).

There is the hallucination theory that all 500 eyewitnesses saw a hallucination of the resurrected Christ. This is ridiculous, because when people have hallucinations, they are never the same. There is the wrong tomb theory that they all went on Sunday morning and the tomb was empty because they went to the wrong tomb. I could see this happening to one or two, but all of them?

There is the theft theory that somebody stole the body. Who stole the body? The disciples stole the body. The disciples went to their graves as martyrs for a lie that they knew was a lie? Would you die for a lie? Maybe the Jews stole the body. Why would the Jews want to make it look like the resurrection happened? Or maybe Rome stole the body. How in the world do you get past the Roman guard? If someone escapes on their watch, their life is on the line. My point is that it takes more faith to believe these crazy naturalistic theories than it does to simply believe that Jesus rose from the dead.

The jailer is ready to kill himself, and here is Paul's response:

*"But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!'" (Acts 16:28).*

The jailer is probably thinking to himself, "This is the weirdest thing I have ever seen. Number one, these guys in prison are praising God. That does not make any sense to me. Number two, they all have a chance to escape, and they do not take the chance. There must be something controlling these guys bigger than they are."

The Lord is using that to open his heart to the reality of God. When you go through a valley and your family and the people you work with and they are watching you, believe me, you have an audience whether you want it or not. The moment you name the name

of Christ, they are watching you. They are trying to figure out: Is that person's life really different?

You go through a valley and you maintain, not through human power, but through the Holy Spirit is power, a sense of tranquility in the midst of a valley; you maintain an optimistic outlook. The people in your family or your coworkers watch that and they say, "That is weird. There must be something special about that person." The Lord is using that to give you an opportunity to evangelize. That is why we need to cooperate with God through these valleys, because the Lord will use them in the lives of other people for purposes of evangelism.

That is what is happening in the mind of this jailer. Why would they be praising the Lord? Why in the middle of the night, in the midst of pain? Why in the world didn't they leave? There must be something unique about them.

Then you have the jailer's reaction. Two things happen with this jailer. Number one is fear:

*"But he called for the lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas" (Acts 16:29).*

He was fearful. Arnold Fruchtenbaum in his commentary, says that he got the hell scared out of him. What he is witnessing is abnormal. People do not act like this. That leads to a question, and it is the most important question a human being could ever ask:

*"And after he brought them out, he said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'" (Acts 16:30).*

Why would you even ask a question like that? Because he knew they had the answer, because he saw the power of God at work in their lives.

There are a lot of people that turn this question into being saved from execution. It is true that the word "save" can be used that way. Paul uses the word "save"—"sozo" (verb), or "soteria (noun)—for deliverance about getting out of prison in Philippians 1:19.

Hebrews 11:7 says,

*"By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household" (Hebrews 11:7).*

There it is not talking about salvation from hell; it is talking about being protected from water. So it is true that the word "save" can sometimes refer to being delivered from some temporal calamity.

Because the word "save" can sometimes mean being saved from some temporal problem, a lot of people try to turn the jailer's words into that: "What must I do to be saved?" But you see, he already knew that he was not going to die, because the prisoners were all accounted for.

*"But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!'" (Acts 16:28).*

*"When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into the prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely" (Acts 16:23).*

People say, "He was just wanting to be saved from execution from Rome," but that issue got fixed the moment Paul made him aware that none of the prisoners had escaped. So the jailer, when he says, "What must I do to be saved?" is not talking about being saved from something temporal; he is talking about being saved from eternal damnation, being saved from an eternity separated from God. It is the way we typically use the word "save" as evangelicals. That is how he is using this word.

Of all of the things you could explore with the mind God has given you—all of the engineering and finance and chemistry and physics and literature which your mind is capable of learning—of all of the things you could do with your mind, which is a powerful tool, the most important question your mind could ever ask is, "What must I do to be saved? What have I got to do? How can I be made right with God?"

Notice the religiosity of this guy: "What must I do?" That is what unsaved people always think—I have to go to church, I have to check a box, I have to give money. Here is the answer—it is the gospel:

*"They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved'" (Acts 16:31).*

He lays out a single condition that is necessary to be made right with God. We call this the one condition of salvation. Lewis Sperry Chafer writes:

*"...because upwards of 150 passages of Scripture condition salvation upon believing only (cf. John 3:16; Acts 16:31)."<sup>4</sup>*

You know the biggies:

*"He [Abraham] believed in the Lord; and He [the Lord] reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6).*

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<sup>4</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, vol. 7, *Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993, 265-66.

Abraham met one condition.

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).*

What do I have to do to not perish but to have eternal life? Believe, which means trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Then the famous one that we are in right here:

*"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved'" (Acts 16:30-31).*

I was watching TV last night, watching Fox News. Franklin Graham came on. I like Franklin Graham. I like his personality. I like what he is doing with Samaritan's Purse. I sat on the edge of my seat watching his infomercial and loved everything he said until he got to the gospel. It was brutal what he did.

He said all of these wonderful things, then he got to the gospel. He had four things you have to do. I am not picking on Franklin Graham; I am just showing you that this is an epidemic in Christendom today. He said, "Number one, tell God you are sorry. Number two, repent of all your sins." I was thinking, "What about the sins that I cannot remember I committed? How do I do that? For how long does the repentance have to last?" Then he continued, "Number three, invite Jesus into your heart. Number four, invite Jesus to take over your life."

That is what he said: Tell God you are sorry; repent of all your sins; invite Jesus into your heart; and invite Jesus to take over. I am telling you, folks, do your own Bible study on this. You will find no such presentation of the gospel like that. Can someone get saved through this? Maybe, but it is not because of this, rather it is in spite of it.

If someone were to do what he says you are supposed to do to be made right with God, I am not really sure they are a Christian because that is not the gospel—tell God you are sorry; repent of all your sins; invite Jesus into your heart; and invite Jesus to take over.

Compare that to Acts 16:31. Paul and Silas said nothing like that to the Philippian jailer:

*"They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved'" (Acts 16:31).*

Period. There is no altar call. There is no guilt. There is no raising your hand. There is no sorrow. There are no tears. It is just trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ. We call this the one condition of salvation.

What about this thing at the end? Let me slip this in:

*"...and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31).*

I guess that means that if he gets saved, the family gets saved automatically, right? Automatic salvation? No, because God does not have any grandchildren; he only has children. If you go down to Acts 16:32 it explains what that little phrase means:

*"And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house" (Acts 16:32).*

*"And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his household" (Acts 16:34).*

When it says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household," it is talking about the fact that he would go into his household and evangelize his house. That is what it means. It is not dealing with automatic salvation.

"The jailer had to believe the gospel, and the results would be spiritual salvation. Sometimes this verse is misinterpreted to mean that if one person in a family is saved, the others will be saved sooner or later as well, but too many believers have seen members of their families die without the Lord. Paul did not promise that the jailer's family would be saved. The phrase 'believe on the Lord Yeshua the Messiah' applied both to the jailer and his house. Both needed to believe to be saved. However, at the time, in strict Roman families the father was the paterfamilias, the head of the house, and was so authoritative that his decision to believe would free others in the House to believe as well, and believe they did."<sup>5</sup>

Dad believed so everybody else in the household is saying, "He is the leader of the house, so I guess it is okay for us to investigate this." They did, and they believed as well.

This is not saying that if one person gets saved, it is some kind of automatic guarantee that everyone else in the household gets saved. It is not saying that God has grandchildren—everyone has to believe on their own—but this is a unique circumstance in Greco-Roman times where the leader gets saved, and that gave the others the liberty to explore the claims of Christ. They believed as well and got saved as well.

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<sup>5</sup> Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 353-54.